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POEMS & PARODIES
BY T. M. KETTLE



Sincerely yours
G. M. Kettle

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BY

T. M. KETTLE

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TOM KETTLE

1880-1916

Two simple words, charged now for some of us with sad and infinite memories. It is not the death of the Professor, nor of the soldier, nor of the politician—nor even of the poet or the essayist—that causes the heart-ache that we feel. It is the loss of that rare, charming, wondrous personality summed up in those two simple words, **Tom Kettle**.

A genial cynic, a pleasant pessimist, an earnest trifler, he was made up of contradictions. A fellow of infinite jest—and infinite sadness. His prototypes were Hamlet or the Melancholy Jacques. Among the delightful essays he has left us in that charming little book, *The Day's*

Burden, is one entitled “A new way of misunderstanding *Hamlet*.” He was himself a veritable Hamlet in this twentieth century Ireland. One may ask, did he quite understand himself? Master of paradox, enunciator of enigma, he was a paradox and an enigma in, and to, himself. Shall we seek now to pluck out the heart of his mystery? The lines are hackneyed beyond hope, but in this instance they apply in truth.

The personality of Kettle had in it something subtle; something essential yet elusive; something not to be defined. He was a great talker in the Johnsonian sense. As a story-teller, it was not so much the point of his tale that counted as his telling of it. The divagations from the text in which he loved to indulge were the delight of his auditors. With truth it may be said that his rich humour, his brilliant, mordant wit, caused his listeners to hang upon his words. And his

outlook was so wide, his soul so big, his mind so broad, and a deep love of humanity so permeated him that his talk, or one might more fittingly say, his discourse, was educating and uplifting. But he was a man of moods, descending from heights of Homeric humour to the depths of a divine despair. Those privileged to hear him thus expounding will cherish the memory while they live. We, too, as it were, have "seen Shelley plain." He charmed, he fascinated. This, in truth, describes him for his spell wrought even on those who actually disliked him.

In the numerous notices printed of him since he died much has been written of the promise of his career. More appropriate it would be to write of his performance. He crowded into thirty-six years of life far more than most men achieve in twice that span. Now the orator is silent, the brilliant wit has ceased to sparkle,

the skilful pen will ply no more. Tom Kettle knows at last the answer to the riddle that baffled him, the Riddle of the Universe.

Well may we mourn—

*For Lycidas is dead ;
Young Lycidas : dead ere his prime,
And hath not left his peer.*

WILLIAM DAWSON.

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PERSONAL.

“ Memorial I would have
. . . a constant presence
with those that love me ”

DEDICATION SONNET

TO MY WIFE

“ Not the sea, only, wrecks the hopes
of men,
Look deeper, there is shipwreck every-
where,”
So mourned the exquisite Roman’s rich
despair,
Too high in death for that ignoble pen.
Nero, his wrecker, is amply wrecked
since then,
And all that Rome’s a whiff of charnel
air ;
But to subdue Petronius’ mal-de-mer
Have we found drugs ? I pray you,
What ? and When ?

Shipwreck, one grieves to say, retains
its vogue :

Or let the keel win on in stouter fashion,
And look ! your golden lie of Tir-na-
n'Og

Is sunset and waste waters, chill and
ashen—

Faith lasts ? Nay, since I knew your
yielded eyes,

I am content with sight of Para-
dise.

TO MY DAUGHTER BETTY,
THE GIFT OF GOD

(ELIZABETH DOROTHY)

In wiser days, my darling rosebud, blown
To beauty proud as was your mother's
prime,
In that desired, delayed, incredible time,
You'll ask why I abandoned you, my own,
And the dear heart that was your baby
throne,
To dice with death. And oh ! they'll
give you rhyme
And reason: some will call the thing
sublime,
And some decry it in a knowing tone.

So here, while the mad guns curse
overhead,
And tired men sigh with mud for couch
and floor,
Know that we fools, now with the foolish
dead,
Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's
shed,
And for the secret Scripture of the poor.

the field, before Guillemont, Somme,
September 4, 1916.

ON LEAVING IRELAND

(JULY 14, 1916)

The pathos of departure is indubitable.

I never felt my own essay "On saying Good-Bye" so profoundly *aux tréfonds du cœur*. The sun was a clear globe of blood which we caught hanging over Ben Edar, with a trail of pure blood vibrating to us across the waves. It dropped into darkness before we left the deck. Some lines came to me, suggested by a friend who thought the mood cynical.

As the sun died in blood, and hill and sea
Grew to an altar, red with mystery,
One came who knew me (it may be over-
much)

Seeking the cynical and staining touch,
But I, against the great sun's burial
Thought only of bayonet-flash and bugle-
call,

And saw him as God's eye upon the deep,
Closed in the dream in which no women
weep,

And knew that even I shall fall on sleep.

EPIGRAM

If grief, like fire, smoked up against
our sight,
The Earth were scarféd in eternal night.

EARLY POEMS

TO YOUNG IRELAND

(WRITTEN IN 1899)

Dead ! art thou dead or sleepest, in
this blank, twilight time,
When hearts are sere and pithless ? Land
of the sword and lyre !

Thy waxen lips are silent, thy brow is
bound with rime,
Hast thou late wed with winter, child
of earth's primal fire ?

The sheathéd blade rusts foully, through
bitter, barren years,
And harp and pen are bond slaves,
thralls to thy children's shame.
We garner cockle harvests, vain words
and little fleers.

From waste lands sown with rancour,
 search them with proving flame !

We droop'd, stark sons of warfare, we
 blushed and slunk from day,
While Love and Truth and Honour died
 in mere fretful fume.

Free brain, free brawn, is given us, then
 sweep we from our way
These shamers of our mother, this idle,
 noisome spume.

For, lo ! an army gathers around a
 standard clean ;

I gird me dinted armour, and press to
 touch the throng.

Hark ! Hark ! The minstrels' war-
 hymn in very strength serene,
My harp is harsh of utterance, yet take
 a pupil's song.

Then stout heart join our battle ! who
hail an eastern sun,
Our toil shall set this people upon earth's
purest height.

Then faint heart join our battle ! and if
our sands be run,
At least we caoin a swan-lay upon the
edge of night.

SOWING

(WRITTEN IN 1899)

One mocked: "Thy brain is mad with
wine;
The fairies spin the threads of night,
And pour their vials of sour blight
About the roots of health, yet thine
And thou, ye garner into verse
Bright flowers to trick a solemn hearse:
The cowslip, maiden-love of spring,
The burning incense of the rose,
The austere lily, her that blows
By winter's marge—each gracious thing
Past or unborn. Weak, trusting fool!
Old Time shall file thee in his school."

“ I know not Time, his last or first ;
With master hands I despoil all
His hoarded sweetness and his gall.
I crush the aeons for my thirst,
And so am mad. Pencils of fire
Limn visions of soul-large desire.

In Faith I cast on frozen ground
An obscure life of sweat and tears ;
In the far Autumn of the years
Men reap full harvests, springing round,
And judge them gifts of kindly chance,
My deed laughs through each mellow
lance.”

DREAMS AND DUTY

Life is an irconstant April laughing into
May,
Weeping with the aftergust of March
storms laid away,
Light o' love ! Her mood is gracious,
fondling sunbeams stray
Out across the cloud-smoke purple of
her cloud robes gray.
Let us dream among the daisies, troll
a roundelay
Where the gorse gold is lavished, and
the lilies pray,
Mary's nuns, whose stainless gift is
Heaven's chaliced ray,

Let us twine a wreath of science, let us
play our play,
Ere we fight the fight of ages, one sweet
prelude-day.

• • • •

The stranger heard and mocked us from
the usurped throne,
Reeled in his scornful laughter, eater of
hearts, blood-blown.
But the Lord God heard and heeded,
therefore we do not moan ;
For He has whispered to us, " The
secret shuttles fly,
Ye know not warp or weaver, yet neither
swerve or sigh,
The eater of hearts shall wither, the
drinker of blood shall die.
I have set you labour, work it ; I will
give you increase,

For first is winter-ploughing, after, my
guerdon, peace ;
Ye shall pluck strength from sorrow,
ripe when the sorrows cease ;
Ye shall win strength and wisdom to
break the stranger's rule,
But if ye slink and babble ye are but
as the fools,
Ye are but as the stranger, fit for the
thorny schools."

A SONG OF VENGEANCE

FOR COMMANDANT SCHEEPERS

(Murdered January 18, 1902)

It is done inexpiably ; thrust him deep
in shameful clay,
Charge his name with every foulness,
rule the world's ear as you may—
But the shadow at your banquet that
you cannot put away !

Weak you thought him, sickness-
vanquished, given to your eager hate.
So you played him and you slew him
with your feline shows of state,
Weak—and lo ! the sanctifying touch
of death has made him great.

As a seed that broadening splits the rock
on which a palace stands,
As a trickling breach that godlike parts
one land in hostile lands,
Is the memory of Scheepers and his
slaying at your hands.

Hill and plain and stream shall guard it,
town and fireside, phrase and song ;
Young men's unsubdued aspiring, old
men's striving wise and strong ;
And though Hope die, Hatred may not
for remembrance of his wrong.

Murdered leader—may God fold you
in the mercy of His temple,
Sleep as sleep our unborn children,
bravest hero and example—
Float the flag or sink for ever, your red
eric shall be ample.

TRANSLATIONS

AT ACHENSEE, TIROL

(From the German of A. Pickler.—Died, 1893)

The old path up, the wood's ranked
gloomy legions,

The lap and the rustle of the lake
behind,

And, roused by these, from Death's more
timely regions

The old thoughts fluttering in a lonely
mind ;

About my way the pine-stems thick and
thicker

Huddle, the mossed stone drips abund-
antly,

And, thro' the screen of woven branches,
flicker

The bright and heaving waves of
Achensee.

Pinewood and primrose scents, the air
has mixt them ;
Poised butterflies, a shining sun-bathed
fleet,
Sky's blue, gaunt granite jags, and
buoyed betwixt them,
The cloud-fleece flushing with the day's
defeat.

The spell is on me, nor can aught deliver ;
Slowly my spirit fails from life and
light,
And Past and Future like a pauseless
river,
Slide darkly down into a darker night.

The red glow wans, the blackbird's trill
and quaver
Dies in the sudden gloom, the broad
world sleeps ;

And, mixed with moon-fire flakes, the
billows waver,
As though dead hands tossed vainly
in their deeps.

I think of the high dead, and that all-
daring
First bard whom Orcus' self might
not withstand,
I think of his vast love, and fruitless
faring,
To pluck one rose from Proserpine's
hand.

The Past is an ill riddle, over-subtle,
The Thing-to-Be a rumour of a cloud,
Would know the last weft of Fate's
whirring shuttle ?
You *shall* know, when they wind you
in your shroud.

Innsbrück, 18th July, 1904.

THE MONKS

A translation from EMILE VERHAEREN.

Dedicated to Father Benedict, 1905.

I do invoke you here, Monks Apostolical,
Fountains of dawn, torches of faith,
wrought candlesticks ;
Stars shedding day across the ages
mystical ;
Builders whose walls for scutcheon bear
the Crucifix.

Hermits who sat on white, high moun-
tains for a throne ;
Hewn marble quick with will, and strength,
and angry truth ;
Preachers with arms uplift and long
sleeves loosely blown
Over bowed heads, and hearts gnawn of
the sateless tooth.

Windows athrob with dawn, rich with all
Eastern dyes ;
Vases of chastity whose fulness might
not cease ;
Mirrors whose depths enfold, as lakes
the dreaming skies,
Hills where our dreams have breath,
fair valleys brimmed with peace.

Seers whose souls, foreknowing death's
enfranchisement,
Walked secretly where walks the mere
flesh of no feet ;
Titans whose breath was more than
squadroned argument ;
Kings strange to Rome set up in Rome's
imperial seat.

Swords hung above the pride of kings
and emperors ;

Lords of a prouder crown and a more
grievious loss ;

Warriors whose flag was spread in more
tremendous wars,

Slayers of heresy with great blows of
the Cross.

Arches and aqueducts of Christian
sanctity,

Pillars of silver, channels pouring from
the East

Rivers of grace at which the peoples
thirstily

Have drunk, and quaffed desire for the
unending Feast.

Tocsins with war and wounds in your
most sombre roll ;

Clarions whose proud, full throats salute
the captain Christ ;

Towers of the sun, whose crosses wear
an aureole
Litten of that far Sun Who was the
Sacrificed.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE LADY OF LIFE

I sat with her, and spoke right goldenly
Of love and beauty, and because her
hair

Brushed me, I plucked down Sirius
like a pear,

To braid it, and had laughter for my fee ;
Yea, suing her to heavier slavery,

Had all but plucked the fruitage of
her lips,

When, lo ! inked clouds and absolute
eclipse,

Courteous, but unmistakable ennui.

Then did I mind me of the sorrow wailed
Thro' poets' books, and how the stream-
ing torch

Of suns greater than Sirius has failed,
And as I shambled out the menial's door
I heard new feet sound in the statued
 porch
And salutations I had heard before.

WHEN OTHERS SEE US AS WE SEE OURSELVES !

Day, with his blotting trumpet, over-threw
My city of dream, and, with his marshalled spears,
My thought that had the unperforming years
Amended and laid the base of heaven true ;
But pitying, signed me priest with chrismal dew,
And I went telling of expatriate tears,
Of Hate cast out with all his sworded peers,
And tower-tops spiring to the gods anew.

One gibed, one wept, one with his drowséd
air

Chilled me to very stone, but no man
hearkened;

So to my love I went—ah ! once love
darkened

Her eyes, and in that darkness I could
hide—

Why should they couch them ? In
her alien stare

I knew she knew all Christs I had denied.

ENNUI

I saw the loath moon rise,
The sun go sweatily down ;
There was famine of sleep in his eyes ;
She was a floating frown.

They nodded heavily
Over an ancient roof,
With a pout o' the shoulders, she,
He with a grind o' the hoof.

And the moon said to the sun :
“ Another day to irk us ! ”
The sun to the touzled moon,
“ Imagine it a circus.”

BALLAD AUTUMNAL

(In which Any Old Fool of an idealistic turn, explains—probably without the palest colour of truth—to Any Other, infected with the same disease, the failure of their lives, labours, and dreams, and the triumph of the wise of this world.)

Hair greying, ashen eyes, uncomely ridges,
Autumn of things ill-done, and things
undone :
How all that water, slipped beneath the
bridges,
Chills the adieux of our defeated sun !
What paltry, unresisted jettison
Of dear hopes held, and there the grave-
yard West,
With mud, miasma, mastless hulks, and
midge !—
We have not lived as wisely as the rest.

That wasteful trick of yours, that gust
prodigious

Of dreams too great for their com-
parison,

Blew stars ablaze, but drowned us in
the ditches.

Sad, generous, valiant, tired eph-
emerion !

Had we but coined the vision when it
shone

We, too, had ruled, and mocked the
dispossessed.

Well ! we have rags, the prudent have
the riches—

We have not lived as wisely as the rest.

They squeezed us, and forgot : your
Je m'en fiche's

Struck in too bloodily to pass for fun.

Our bread was nibbled by the water-witches,
All that we have is given, and is gone.
Some penny, wheedled for a currant bun,
Some shirtless, soapless starveling, uncaressed,
Still thanks us for, but not our fed ambitious—
We have not lived as wisely as the rest.

ENVOI

Prince, lift your heart up out of Acheron,
Death bows us gravely to that cleaner test.
Yea ! when all books are closed, all races run,
We may have lived as wisely as the rest.

THE LOST BALL

(A golfing rhapsody suggested by "The Lost Chord.")

Playing one day at the seaside, I was
topping my balls on the tees,
And the sand and the bent were littered
with fragments of double D's ;
Piffle supreme I was playing, and varying
" slice " with " pull,"
But I hit one ball a wallop like a kick
of a Spanish bull.

It whistled its way towards Heaven in a
rocket's magic flight ;
It cancelled the crimson sunset like the
shroud of a moonless night ;
It knocked the paint off a rainbow and
scattered the stars like bees ;
And sped thro' the stellar spaces as tho'
it would never cease.

It looped the loop like Pégoud in parabolic curves ;
It was salve to my wounded feelings and balm to my ruffled nerves ;
It clove my opponent's gizzard like the stab of a Lascar's knife ;
And produced the hardest swearing I have ever heard in my life.

I have sought in the bent and the bushes that one magnificent ball ;
It may be Antarctic crystals were broken by its fall ;
It may be that Death as Caddy may light on the spot it fell ;
I may have holed out in Heaven or find myself trapped in Hell.

POLITICAL

PARNELL

(For the unveiling, 1st October, 1911)

Tears will betray all pride, but when ye
mourn him,

Be it in soldier wise ;
As for a captain who hath gently borne
him,
And in the midnight dies.

Fewness of words is best ; he was too
great

For ours or any phrase.
Love could not guess, nor the slipped
hound of hate

Track that soul's secret ways.

Signed with a sign, unbroken, unrevealed,
His Calvary he trod ;
So let him keep, where all world-wounds
are healed
The silences of God.

Yet is he Ireland's too : a flaming coal
Lit at the stars, and sent
To burn the sin of patience from her soul,
The scandal of content.

A name to be a trumpet of attack ;
And, in the evil stress,
For England's iron No ! to fling her back
A grim granatic Yes.

He taught us more, this best as it was
last :
When comrades go apart
They shall go greatly, cancelling the past,
Slaying the kindlier heart.

Friendship and love, all clean things and
unclean,
Shall be as drifted leaves,
Spurned by our Ireland's feet, that
queenliest Queen
Who gives not but receives.

So freedom comes, and comes no other
wise ;
He gave—" The Chief"—gave well ;
Limned in his blood across your clearing
skies
Look up and read ; Parnell !

THE HOUSE OF LORDS: AN EPITAPH

So you proscribe, and you forbid
Peace, and the trooping ghosts of hate
Enfranchise of the coffin-lid—
Your lordships' lordship speaks too late.

That word had held when yours, for you,
Thieving and reaving smote us first :
If souls were crooked, swords were true ;
They took and kept because they durst.

Still, though the pride of naked swords
Passed to a meaner, stouter hand,
You said, and it was done, my lords,
Yours was the law, and yours the land.

You clove the priest, you robbed the
shrine,

With spoil of Paul and Peter fat,
Brimmed altar-cups with altar-wine
To toast your new Magnificat.

The poor, who are the lords of death,
To you were mud in foundered ways ;
Your sun was red Elizabeth,
Your noon, the Dutchman's Penal days.

Hunger and halters, grey despair,
Marah of exile, coastless seas,
Baal for master-minister—
You gave, my lords, and took your ease.

And then, in Paris, patience broke ;
“Who is this thing that should op-
press ? ”
Men asked : “ And shall we bear his yoke,
This idle whiff of nothingness ? ”

That was your lordships' epitaph ;
Still might you sell a nation's soul,
Spit on its tomb, and yawn and laugh,
But, thief to thief, the judgment stole.

This Ireland whom my lords despised—
Languid behind inverted thumbs—
She who believed and agonised
Leads on the loud, victorious drums.

Wave huddled wave, and now the last
Havocs your castle, built of sand—
We take the future, you the past,
Ours is the State, the Flag, the Land.

REASON IN RHYME

Will Watson, of the still unanchored art ;
What random gust, what overwhelming
sea
Has riven you apart
From us, and from the flagship of the
free ?
You whose rich phrase, and vibrant,
wont to be
Trumpet and drum of onset and attack ;
Who, when of Abdul's ways you stooped
to sing,
Would give us just the dire, full-throated
thing ;
Now, when that much-damned man has
got the sack,

You change your tune, and make to
pipe us back
From honour, and the task of Liberty !
Why argue, though ? The plain posi-
tion is
You are mistaken in your premises.
You blind your sight with hot, emotional
mists,
Your way of thought is greatly too
morose
And moist and lachrymose,
For us, a muddled State's last realists.
We Irish, to be brief,
Are nowise grievers for the sake of grief.
I pray you, dry those sympathetic tears,
They rust the will ; and, Will, your
nation's sin
Is no dead shame, meet to be covered in,
But a live fact that sears.

Cancel the past ? Soothly when it befalls
That ye amend the present, and are just,
Go knock your head on Dublin Castle
walls :

Are they irrelevant, historic dust,
Or a hard present-tense ?

Search through the large print of the
Statute Book

For your much-valued Lords' benevo-
lence,

And swept in vision westward, snatch
a look

At that dim land, where hunger claims
to be

The honoured guest in every family ;
And the slain sun writes, in a scribble
of shame,

The word of utter Hell, Clanricarde's
name.

Go South and North ;
Weep, if you will, along the dismal quays,
Watching the unreturning ships go forth
To fling our seed of strength and hope
and worth
In far, untributary ways.
And then the soul is something—at least
in verse.
Ours, poet, is to be a thing of straw,
A stained, numb thing, that sits without
the law
Of yours, great master of the universe ?
Most nobly planned ! But, Watson,
there's a text—
Done in stout English in King James's
reign—
Which says that souls are not to be
annexed,
Not for the whole world's gain.

Cancel the past ! Why, yes ! We, too,
 have thought
Of conflict crowned and drowned in
 olives of peace ;
But when Cuchullin and Ferdiadh fought
There lacked no pride of warrior courte-
 sies,
And so must this fight end.
Bond, from the toil of hate we may not
 cease :
Free, we are free to be your friend.
And when you make your banquet, and
 we come,
Soldier with equal soldier must we sit,
Closing a battle, not forgetting it.
With not a name to hide,
This mate and mother of valiant "rebels"
 dead
Must come with all her history on her
 head.

We keep the past for pride :
No deepest peace shall strike our poets
dumb :
No rawest squad of all Death's volun-
teers,
No rudest man who died
To tear your flag down in the bitter years,
But shall have praise, and three times
thrice again,
When at that table men shall drink with
men.

ASQUITH IN DUBLIN

(AUGUST, 1912)

You stepped your steps, and the music
marched, and the torches tossed
As you filled your streets with your
comic Pentecost,
And the little English went by and the
lights grew dim ;
We, dumb in the shouting crowd, we
thought of Him.

Of Him, too great for our souls and ways,
Too great for laughter or love, praise or
dispraise,
Of Him, and the wintry swords, and the
closing gloom—
Of Him going forth alone to His lonely
doom.

No shouts, my Dublin then ! Not a
light nor a cry—
You kept them all till now, when the
little English go by !

ULSTER

(A REPLY TO RUDYARD KIPLING)

The red, redeeming dawn
Kindled in Easter skies,
Falls like God's judgment on
Lawyers, and lords, and lies.
What care these evil things,
Though menaced and perplexed,
While Kipling's banjo strings
Blaspheme a sacred text ?

Never did freemen stand,
Never were captains met,
From Dargai to the Rand,
From Parnell to De Wet,
Never, on native sod,
Weak justice fared the worst,

But Kipling's Cockney "Gawd"
Most impotently cursed.

So now, when Lenten years
Burgeon, at last, to bless
This land of Faith and Tears
With fruitful nobleness,
The poet, for a coin,
Hands to the gabbling rout
A bucketful of Boyne
To put the sunrise out.

"Ulster" is ours, not yours,
Is ours to have and hold,
Our hills and lakes and moors
Have shaped her in our mould.
Derry to Limerick Walls
Fused us in battle flame;
Limerick to Derry calls
One strong-shared Irish name.

We keep the elder faith,
Not slain by Cromwell's sword ;
Nor bribed to subtler death
By William's broken word.
Free from those chains, and free
From hate for hate endured,
We share the liberty
Our lavish blood assured.

One place, one dream, one doom,
One task and toil assigned,
Union of plough and loom
Have bound us and shall bind.
The wounds of labour healed,
Life rescued and made fair—
There lies the battlefield
Of Ulster's holy war.

TO IRELAND

Men so worthy
Suffered for Thee,
Men so poor can die ;
Then come gather
All, or rather
Those who ask not why.

WAR POEMS

PADDY

(After Mr. Kipling)

I went into the talkin' shop to see about
the Bill ;
The Premier 'e ups and says : " We're
waitin' . . . waitin' still ! "
The Tories grinned, and Balfour strung
our gamble Haman-high,
I outs into the street again, and to meself
sez I :
O, it's Paddy this, and Paddy that, an'
" A cattle-driven crew ! "
But 'twas " Murphy o' the Munsters ! "
when the trump of battle blew.
When the wind of battle blew, my boys,
when the blast of battle blew,
It was Burke, and Shea and Kelly when
we marched to Waterloo.

I looked into a newspaper to see about
the land
That bred the man who broke the sin
that Bonaparte planned ;
They'd room for cricket scores, and tips,
and trash of every kind,
But when I asked of Ireland's cause, it
seemed to be behind.
For it's Paddy this, and Paddy that, and
" Don't annoy us, please ! "
But it's " Irish Rifles forward—Fast ! "
when the bullets talk like bees,
When the bullets yawn like bees, my
boys, when the bullets yawn like bees,
It's " Connaught blood is good enough "
when they're chanting R.I.P's.

Yes ! Sneerin' round at Irishmen, and
Irish speech and ways
Is cheaper—much—than snatchin' guns
from battle's red amaze :

And when the damned Death's-Head-
Dragoons roll up the ruddy tide
The *Times* won't spare a Smith to tell
how Dan O'Connell died.

For it's Paddy this, and Paddy that, and
"The Fifth'll prate and prance!"
But it's "Corks and Inniskillings—
Front!" when Hell is loose in
France,

When Clare and Kerry take the call that
crows the shrapnel dance,
O, it's "Find the Dublin Fusiliers!"
when Hell is loose in France.

We ain't no saints or scholars much, but
fightin' men and clean,

We've paid the price, and three times
thrice for Wearin' o' the Green.

We held our hand out frank and fair, and
half forgot Parnell,

For Ireland's hope and England's too—
and it's yours to save or sell.

For it's Paddy this, and Paddy that,
"Who'll stop the Uhlan blade?"
But Tommy Fitz from Malahide, and
Monaghan's McGlade,
When the ranks are set for judgment,
lads, and the roses droop and fade,
It's "Ireland in the firin' line!" when the
price of God is paid.

SERGEANT MIKE O'LEARY

It was Sergeant Mike O'Leary who
broke the barricade,
Who took the chance, and won the Cross
that crowns the bayonet trade ;
'Twas "M'anam do Dhia," and "How's
your heart," and "How could we
forget ?"
But Michael from Inchigeela will fill a
ballad yet.

Oh ! a fair and pleasant land is Cork
for wit and courtesy,
Ballyvourney East and Baile Dubh and
Kilworth to the sea :
And when they light the turf to-night,
spit, stamp, swear as of yore,
It's the Sergeant Mike O'Leary's ghosts
that ward the southern shore.

A NATION'S FREEDOM

Word of the Tsar ! and the drowse
malign is broken ;
The stone is rolled from the tomb and
Poland free,
This is the strong evangel. The guns
have spoken ;
And the scribble of flame of the guns is
Liberty.

Have you not met her, my lords, a-walk
in the garden,
Ranging the dawn, even she, the three
times dead ?
Nay ! But in bondage, sundered from
light and pardon—
But now the water is wine, and the
marriage read.

Word of the Tsar ! My lords, I think of
another
Crowned with dolour, forbidden the sun
abased,
Bloodied, unbroken, abiding—Ah !
Queen, my Mother,
I have prayed the feet of the Judgment
of God to haste.

Count me the price in blood that we have
not squandered,
Spendthrifts of blood from our cradle,
wastefully true,
Name me the sinister fields where the
Wild Geese wandered,
Lille and Cremona and Landen and
Waterloo.

When the white steel-foam swept on the
tidal onset,

When the last wave lapsed, and the sea
turned back to its sleep,
We were there in the waste and the wreck-
age, Queen of the Sunset !
Paying the price of the dreams that
cannot sleep.

The altar is set ; we uplift again the
chalice ;
The priest is in purple ; the bell booms
to the sacrifice.
The trumpets summon to death, and
Ireland rallies—
Tool or free ? We have paid, and over-
paid, the price.

Word of the Tsar ! And Russia rises
to vision,
Poland and Ireland—thus, my lords,
was an augured fate.

The days draw in, and the ways narrow
down to decision—
Will they chaffer, and cheapen, and ruin,
or yield to be great ?

Written in Belgium, August, 1914

A SONG OF THE IRISH ARMIES

A wind blew out of the Prussian plain ;
It scourged Liege, and it broke Louvain,
And Belgium shook with the tramp of
Cain,

That a Kaiser might be mad.

“ Iron is God ! ”—and they served him
well—

“ Honour a mark for shot and shell.”
So they loosed the devils out of Hell
From Birr to Allahabad.

THE OLD SOLDIERS SING :

But we took them from Mons to the
banks of the Marne,

And helped them back on their red return;
We can swim the Rhine if the bridges
burn,

And Mike O’Leary’s the lad !

Not for this did our fathers fall ;
That truth, and pity, and love, and all
Should break in dust at a trumpet call,
Yea ! all things clean and old.
Not to this had we sacrificed :
To sit at the last where the slayers diced,
With blood-hot hands for the robes of
Christ,
And snatch at the Devil's gold.

THE NEW SOLDIERS SING :

To Odin's challenge we cried Amen !
We stayed the plough, and laid by the
pen,
And we shouldered our guns like gentle-
men,
That the wiser weak should hold.

Blood on the land, and blood on the sea ?
So it stands as ordained to be,
Stamp, and signet, and guarantee
Of the better ways we knew.

Time for the plough when the sword has
won ;
The loom will wait on the crashing gun,
And the hands of peace drop benison
When the task of death is through.

OLD AND NEW SOLDIERS SING :

Then lift the flag of the Last Crusade !
And fill the ranks of the Last Brigade !
March on to the fields where the world's
re-made,
And the Ancient Dreams come true !

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